

SOCIALIST STUDIES

No. 9

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**OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
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WHICH WAY RUSSIAN CAPITALISM?

Throughout the Twentieth Century the Socialist Party of Great Britain has studied Russian Capitalism. We have not studied Russian Capitalism as academics and nor do we particularly care about the problems of Russian Capitalism anymore than we care about the problems of British Capitalism. The ruling class of any one country pays politicians, professors and journalists for this purpose.

However, we are students of Marx and we have inherited from Marx the scientific study of how and why capitalism works; the social laws which act upon it; and its historical genesis and termination within social evolution.

This is in contrast to the sterile asocial and anti-historical obsessions of bourgeois or vulgar economics with its myth about the autonomous individual and how her insatiable demand outstrips supply, or with the merits or otherwise between private and state capitalism. Instead of being concerned about prices; of market fluctuations or with buying and selling, our Marxian approach studies how different social groups will relate to the means of production in different ways. As Engels put it;

"Economies deals not with things but with relations between persons and in the last resort, between classes; there relations,..., are always attached to things and appear as things."

F Engels (1859). 'Review of Marx's Critique of Political Economy'.

Some groups in society may have direct access to the means of production. Others will have only indirect access to them. Workers, for example, have to sell their mental & physical powers, their labour-power, before they can work along side the means of production. Some may have no access to them at all (the unemployed). Those who do exercise ownership and control over the means of production have authority over those who do not. Social power stems from the way in which different classes do or do not control the means for making a living. This is why Socialists see class as the basic constituent of society and not gender or race. Class accords to how a particular social group relates to the means of production. This is why Marx and Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto;

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

This means that the Class Struggle is the focus of attention for socialists as it was for Marx and Engels. The class struggle occurs between workers who are forced to sell their mental and physical abilities for a wage or a salary and a capitalist class who own the means of production and distribution, i.e. mineral resources, factories, communication systems and distribution points etc. but who only engage in production if a profit is to be made. Capitalists constantly strive to expand capital irrespective of whether human needs are being satisfied or not. They cannot be blamed for this process. They are, what Marx called, a 'personification of capital'; just as workers are a 'personification of labour'.

This understanding of Capitalism was known to the SPGB from its formation in 1904. So consequently, when socialists came to study Russia in 1917, from the coup d'état by Lenin and the Bolsheviks onwards, it was primarily to assess the claims being made at the time of whether Russia was 'Socialist' and the Bolsheviks 'Marxists'. We concluded that Russia was not Socialist but an emerging Capitalist state and far from being Marxists, the Bolsheviks drew their political heritage from the policies of Bismark's nationalisation and reform programmes and the conspiratorial tactics of Blanqui.

Our analysis at the time showed that the conditions for Socialism were not yet ripe; the working class were poorly developed, and socialist knowledge was severely lacking. Through the imposition of a dictatorship by a group of determined intellectuals how could the Bolsheviks be described as Marxists? With the existence of the wages system, the coercive machinery of government, commodity production and trade by Russian companies upon the world market, how could Russia be described as anything but Capitalist? More important for Socialists was the existence of the class struggle in Russia between workers and state employers. Russia's new ruling class tried to extract as much surplus value out of the workforce as possible with the workers resisting as best they could. As the Russian joke went; *'They pretend to pay us and we pretend to work'*. Nor were the SPGB ever taken in by the claims of the Five Year Plans. State administration by bureaucrats of commodity production and socialist production for social use under common ownership and democratic control are not the same thing. Our Marxian analysis of

Russia could never describe it as Socialist.

What of the future in Russia? In the 1934 SPGB pamphlet 'Questions of the Day' a whole chapter was devoted to Russian Capitalism and the Bolsheviks. The last section in the article, entitled 'What of the Future', argued that a socialist movement will grow in Russia but it will derive from the working class and not from the Russian dictatorship. Capitalist revolutions have a tendency to work themselves out as time goes by. Clearly this was the case in the late 1920's when Stalin consolidated power into his own hands in a similar manner to Napoleon in France after the French revolution. History shows that revolutionaries of the beginning, usually students, philosophy professors, romantic poets and playwrights are followed by more and more reactionary successors, usually lawyers, bureaucrats and accountants. In a concluding remark the pamphlet had this to say on the Bolsheviks;

"Neither in their views on the gaining of power, nor in their belief - now rapidly losing the hold it at first gained abroad - about the possibility of imposing socialism by dictatorship, have the Bolsheviks added anything to the knowledge possessed by Marx."

Marx stressed that Socialism could only ever be established by the working class taking conscious political action. The Bolsheviks rejected this. However, the Bolshevik attempt to change society through dictatorship has been a total failure. As the Party prophetically remarked;

"In due course of time that failure will become obvious to the workers inside and outside of Russia."

Indeed this has been the case. But in its failure the Russian dictatorship has polluted the word 'Socialism' and not only distorted Marx but aligned him to their regime. They have done more damage to the propagation of socialist ideas than any market evangelist from the Adam Smith Institute. Russian state capitalism has made the work of socialists that much harder. We have to spend time arguing what socialism is not. We also have to spend time demonstrating why Socialism has not collapsed or why the theories of Marx have not been refuted by experience.

Neither Communism or Socialism as understood by Marx, Engels

and ourselves has failed or collapsed. Socialism or Communism (they both mean the same thing) has not yet been established anywhere in the world. There has not yet existed a society in which buying and selling has been replaced by producing goods solely and directly for human consumption. Nowhere in the world has the social potential within the productive forces been freed from the impediment imposed upon it by Capital.

As for Marx. Well, his analysis of Capitalism still holds validity. After all, it was a Marxist study of Russia in 1917 which designated it Capitalist. It was the theory power of the Materialist Conception of History which enabled Socialists to formulate the correct analysis of Russia and determine its future course. (See our leaflet "Turmoil in Russia.")

So what can workers in Russia do about the circumstances in which they now find themselves? They could do no worse than open Volume I of Capital in which Marx writes as follows;

"One nation can and should learn from others. And even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement...it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen its birth pangs". Capital, Volume I, L&W p20.

Just as one nation can learn from another so workers from one geographical region of the world can learn from another. Workers in Russia could learn from class conscious workers in this country. That is learn from workers who make up the Socialist Party of Great Britain

This means pursuing the class struggle as a political struggle by class conscious workers understanding and desiring socialism. This political action will have to take place within a Socialist party having a set of coherent principles; a practical political programme for achieving Socialism and nothing but, and a clearly defined Socialist objective. Such an organisation will be without leaders and the led.

Workers in Russia have just made history for another class. At some stage in the future they will make history for themselves.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S REFORMIST POLICY PROCLAIMED.

The journal, Discussion Bulletin, (P.O. Box 1514, Grand Rapids M.I. 49501, U.S.A.), in its issue dated Jan-Feb 1993, published a letter from Dave Perrin, a member of the Clapham based Socialist Party and regular contributor to their journal, the Socialist Standard.

His letter confirms what we have said about that party's planned break with the principles on which the Socialist Party of Great Britain was founded in 1904. His particular argument is that supporting some "individual reforms" is not reformist.

He charges us with "apparent inability to make the distinction between opposing all reformism and opposing all individual reforms", and with thinking that:- "supporting and welcoming the efforts of the working class to gain necessary political and trade union freedoms...is evidence of reformism".

So where did the founder members of the Socialist Party of Great Britain stand on this issue of supporting "individual" reforms?

It was dealt with in the first issue of the Socialist Standard (September 1904) in a Statement explaining why we left the Social Democratic Federation. One of the reasons given in the Statement was that the S.D.F. was:-

"surely developing into a mere reform Party, seeking to obtain the provision of Free Maintenance for school children".

With this further explanation:-

"Those Socialists who, within its ranks, sought to withstand this policy, have found the task to be an impossible one, and have consequently seceded and formed themselves into the Socialist Party of Great Britain".

The issue was dealt with again in February 1909 in a leaflet "Socialism V Social Reform". Its opening sentence read:-

"The Socialist Party of Great Britain stands for Socialism and is the only party in this country which makes the achievement of Socialism its immediate as well as its ultimate objective".

followed by the assertion:-

"a propaganda of palliatives...cannot be made to square with the Socialist position".

Another article, "The Socialist Party and Reforms", in the Socialist Standard for July 1911, dealt, among other things, with the provision of meals for school children, arising from a letter from a reader which asked specifically for the Party's attitude to educational reform; male suffrage and the feeding of school children.

The article contained these statements:-

"The S.P.G.B., as distinguished from every other organisation in this country, is the party with Socialism and nothing but Socialism as its object. ... It cannot seek support for or advocate any policy of reform or anti-reform...such policies might attract those who do not accept the object of the Party, thus weakening the definite aim".

In recent years the Party has fallen into the hands of people who, along with adopting the name The Socialist Party (it now prominently adorns the entrance to their office) have followed a reformist policy and found excuses for giving approval to organisations supporting capitalism. Some instances are given later on in this article.

DEMOCRACY AND THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

In his letter Mr. Perrin asserts that we were expelled from the Party "after a Party Poll in 1991 for persistent and wilful undemocratic behaviour"; namely that we continued to hold propaganda meetings in the name of the Socialist Party of Great Britain in defiance of a resolution passed at the 1988 Conference which laid it down that the name The Socialist Party should be used "generally by speakers at indoor and outdoor meetings".

Mr. Perrin does not mention that we took our stand on the ground, among others, of Clause 8 of the Declaration of Principles, which opens with the words:- "The Socialist Party of Great Britain therefore enters the field of political action...".

At its meeting on 3rd January 1989 the Executive Committee of his Party, rejected our protest that insistence on the use of "The Socialist Party" at meetings violated Clause 8 of the Declaration of

Principles. They carried the following resolution:-

"The Executive Committee holds that in view of the Annual Conference 1988 ruling on the use of the Party's name (whether or not Camden and North West London Branches believe the Declaration of Principles is contradicted) The Executive Committee and all Party members must abide by Conference resolution".

As membership of the Party had from the start been confined to applicants who declared in writing their agreement with the Object and Declaration of Principles of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, respect for democratic practice would have ensured that the change of name and the abrogation of Clause 8 should not be entertained without a Party Poll, but the 1988 Conference rejected our demand that a Poll be taken.

The Socialist Party is now in the invidious position of disregarding the Declaration of Principles in practice, and retaining it merely as a piece of "shop window dressing".

THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S APPROVAL OF POLITICAL PARTIES SUPPORTING CAPITALISM.

Mr. Perrin claims that his organisation "never gives support to pro-capitalist political organisations who may profess support for democratic and trade union rights for the working class".

In making this claim he disregards the support given by those who now control the Socialist Party to the Polish political organisation Solidarity, which in 1989 won the election and became the government of capitalist Poland.

In December 1981 they published a leaflet headed "Solidarity - and the Crisis of Polish State Capitalism" which, with minor alterations was reproduced as an article in the Socialist Standard, January 1982.

It had this to say about Solidarity:-

"By their actions, the workers in Solidarity have won the admiration and support of Socialists..."

It described Solidarity as "a working class organisation" and

announced that a meeting had been organised for 4th January "with guest speaker from Polish Solidarity Campaign".

The pretence was maintained that Solidarity was a trade union with 10 Million members (Socialist Standard April 1981). That Poland, a largely peasant country with a population of 35 million, could have a trade union with 10 million members was nonsensical.

That it was not a trade union was admitted in the Socialist Standard (December 1982) which said that its membership "includes almost all sections of the population including 'intellectuals', shopkeepers, farmers and students".

Two correspondents of The Times in Poland denied that it was a trade union. One of them reported this in the issue for 14th November 1981:-

"Solidarity was registered as an independent trade union on November 10th, 1980. But it is not really a trade union. It is, in its own words, "a social movement".

The other correspondent (The Times, 8th January 1982) referred to "the growing strength of Solidarity, and its emergence as a de facto political opposition".

Of course this approval and support for the Solidarity political organisation would have been unthinkable to Socialists who considered themselves governed by the Declaration of Principles. Clause 8 declares that the Socialist Party of Great Britain "must be hostile to every other party" and Clause 8 that "The Socialist Party of Great Britain enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist".

However, having seen Mr. Perrin's gift for discerning nonexistent "distinctions" we cannot rule out the possibility that he will come back with the argument that we ought to see the distinction between supporting a capitalist party abroad, in Poland, and supporting a capitalist party in this country; the first being acceptable to his Party, and the latter not.

We would then have to refer him to the refusal by the Executive

Committee of his Party to take action against a member of that party who described the life-long reformist and opponent of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, James Maxton, M.P., as "The Personification of left-wing democratic socialism", and as having "influenced thousands of young people to become Socialists"; "SOCIALIST" being the member's name for members of the Labour Party.

That shady business is fully described in our Socialist Studies No.8.

NOTES ON REFORMS

Historical difference between "Capitalist Reformers" and what we call "Reformist" Parties.

THE CAPITALIST REFORMERS.

Capitalism constantly throws up problems which have to be dealt with in order to facilitate the smooth working of capitalism and to secure its survival. Historically, there is a long line of supporters of capitalism who fought for reforms: among them those who secured the legalisation of trade unions, the extension of the franchise, the abolition of the Corn Laws, provision of working class housing, Local Government Reform, free compulsory education etc. Later on, Lloyd George and his campaign to provide old age pensions and unemployment insurance; culminating in the Beveridge Scheme and the so-called "Welfare State" which was agreed by all three parties in the National Government 1940-1945. Also the Health Service.

The same National Government adopted the commitment to provide "Full Employment". It was based on the work of J.M. Keynes who declared that it was "To save capitalism from revolution". In the U.S.A. Roosevelt's "New Deal" had the same object.

THE "REFORMIST" PARTIES

What we call reformist parties (eg the 19th century Social Democratic Parties, on the Continent and the U.K.) are a separate issue and have a different history. They began, not as parties to reform capitalism and preserve it, but as parties seeking the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by Socialism.

They started as "Marxist" organisations or at least as parties paying lip service to Marx. G.B. Shaw, before he adopted the Fabian Society policy based on Jevons, was an active exponent of Marxist economics. And the first Chairman of the Labour Party, Keir Hardie, proclaimed at that time that the Labour Party was Marxist, aiming to establish Communism, based on Marx's "From each according to ability, to each according to need". The line of development of all these "Social Democratic Parties" has been that they have moved away from their original aim of abolishing capitalism and have become mere alternative governments to the avowedly capitalist parties. Most of them, like the German, Portuguese, Spanish and Russian parties have now formally abandoned their "Marxism".

The S.P.G.B.'s explanation of the degeneration of the social democratic parties is that they all, for reasons of political expediency, adopted programmes of reforms or "immediate demands". (See the Party's edition of the Communist Manifesto, pages 24-26 for the Programme of the German Party).

All of these parties, including the British S.D.F., fell into the hands of Reformists who had no real interest in the original Socialist Objective. Marx and Engels approved these reformist programmes and did not see what they would lead to. There are therefore, two quite separate questions that need to be answered.

Question 1. What has been the effect, for the working class, of the work of the capitalist reformers in reforming capitalism to preserve it?

The answer is that, at very considerable cost to themselves, they have preserved capitalism. For the capitalists it is a kind of insurance and for which they bear the cost.

Question 2. What have the reformist parties achieved in respect of their original object of abolishing capitalism, or of bringing Socialism nearer?

The Answer is: Absolutely Nothing.

Even in respect of the reforms themselves, there are only minor differences between what Tory and Liberal governments have done and what Labour governments have done. In respect of the Keynesian policy of Full Employment and no more depressions, the Labour Party has been a total failure just as the Keynesian Tory Governments have been. In 1976 the Callaghan Labour government specifically threw Keynes overboard and adopted the old Monetarist

rubbish; which has been continued by the Thatcher Government and Major Government. Unemployment follows its own course and neither Labour nor Tory governments can do anything about it, except to wait for the tide to turn in accordance with capitalism's own economic laws, as explained by Marx.

THE PARTY'S ATTITUDE TO REFORMS.

The Party has always rejected the policy of having a list of "immediate demands". It condemned the S.D.F. for having such a policy. The first issue of the Socialist Standard in September 1904, condemned the S.D.F. for "developing into a mere reform party, seeking to obtain the provision of Free Maintenance for School Children". This was not based on a belief that all reforms "are detrimental to working class interests", but on the principle that "The S.P.G.B.... is the Party with Socialism and nothing but Socialism as its Object" (S.S. July 1911). Party policy was defined in the Socialist Standard July 1911 as:-

"It (The Party) cannot seek support for, or advocate any policy of reform or anti-reform". Such a policy is the only way to avoid being dragged into the mire of capitalist politics, and is still sound today. From time to time there have been some Socialist Party members who have wanted the Party to adopt a reform policy; in effect going back to the policy of the S.D.F. One such occasion was the proposal put by Manchester Branch at the 1970 Conference.

"The Party should support, i.e. agree with and encourage working class action to improve workers' living standards not only on the industrial front but also in housing, education and other welfare fields".

It will be seen that this would include "Free Maintenance for School Children" and the rest of the S.D.F.'s list of immediate demands.

THE REDISTRIBUTION OF MISERY 1942-1992

The year 1992 was the 50th anniversary of the Beveridge Report. According to Abel Smith **THE BEVERIDGE REPORT: ITS ORIGIN AND OUTCOME** (LSE Magazine Autumn/Winter 1992) it was "a statement of intent". During a period of world war preceded by a period between two world wars of mass unemployment, deplorable health and housing provision, poverty, malnutrition and disease, it is not surprising that to many the Beveridge Report seemed to offer salvation for the future, or as was stated then "security from womb to tomb". The Beveridge Report itself made clear its intent.

"Each individual citizen is now more likely to concentrate upon his war effort if he feels that his government will be ready in time with plans for a better world" (p.171); "the employees should have security, should be properly maintained during the inevitable intervals of unemployment or of sickness, should have the content which helps to make them efficient producers" (p.109); "the existing social services would at once be made more beneficial and more intelligible to those whom they serve and more economical in their administration" (p.6 our emphasis).

It was not a better world of hope, but an intent to get workers to support the capitalist war effort, to make them more efficient in the long run, and to maintain workers for the capitalists as cheaply as possible. Abel Smith states: "It was seen by many ... as the dawning of a new age to replace the pre war horrors of mass unemployment, inability to afford health care, and poverty in sickness, widowhood and old age." (p.14)

This is a misleading view of poverty. The sick, widows, and aged of the capitalist class do not suffer from unemployment or lack of health care. Further even the more fortunate workers, highly paid in regular work, cannot contemplate permanent security. Since the implementation of the plan many workers with employment have continued to suffer inadequate health care, poverty and inadequate housing.

In 1943 we published a pamphlet **"BEVERIDGE RE-ORGANISES POVERTY"** which stated on the cover "the Beveridge Plan will not end the poverty of the working class. It is not a "new world" of hope but a redistribution of misery." Whilst we recognise that most

workers today are in many ways better off than in 1942, we stand by what we stated 50 years ago: "During well over 100 years of the political rule of the capitalists hundreds of reform measures have become law, and most of them were offered as means to ease the lot of the workers, lift the burden from the sons of toil, raise the dignity of labour, ensure an equal partnership between Capital and Labour etc. etc., yet it still needs....one of the most publicised capitalist economists of the day to remedy once more all those evils which, if the case for social reform holds good, have been remedied over and over again in the past." (p.2) "....the proposals arise from the problems of one section of society only, the working class and are therefore not "social", and the "security" they offer is not much more than security from starvation, and we are not prepared to grace this condition with the term "security" at all." (p.5)

"....Beveridge ... has shown how the complex problem of distributing the very barest necessities to the more unfortunate members of the working class can be organised in accordance with the most modern methods of business efficiency". (p.11) "....many of Beveridge's proposals are in fact already in operation,..... although through various and not necessarily connected agencies. Beveridge wishes to make them of universal application and to improve and economise their administration". (p.12/13) "....(it is fairly safe to say too that it will be whittled down after receiving attention from Government experts). We earnestly ask workers to consider whether a system that can offer nothing better than this miserable pittance in terms of ill health and unemployment should not be changed without further delay."(p.15)

In the report (p.92) Beveridge had stated: "It is dangerous to be in any way lavish to old age, until adequate provision has been assured for all other vital needs, such as the prevention of disease and the adequate nutrition of the young:", and on p.96 "....every person who can go on working after reaching pensionable age, to go on working and postpone retirement and the claiming of a pension." We commented (p.17) "....this statement gives a fair indication of his whole approach....his aim is to maintain a sufficiently healthy and efficient working population, and when age prevents further work his concern diminishes".

Beveridge was never concerned with abolishing the gulf which separates riches and poverty, but with devising ways and means to ensure that the amount received by the workers in wages should be

distributed in the best manner from the point of view of efficiency. We were correct to give our pamphlet the title BEVERIDGE REORGANISES POVERTY.

"The great problem stays even if every dot and comma of the report is put in operation. That problem is the outstanding social problem of the age - the poverty of the working class, and not just the additional burden in times of unemployment, old age and sickness, burdens incidentally Beveridge does little to lift. The poverty of the working class is due to the private ownership by the capitalists of the means of production and distribution. Socialism alone can end that poverty". (p.20)

Once again our warnings to the working class have been proven by history; capitalism cannot be reformed to give all a secure life. The proposals were whittled down by Labour and Conservative governments. It has redistributed misery, and has not solved one problem for the working class. Ill health, unemployment, bad housing and poverty remain. Capitalism cannot organise society to satisfy the needs of all. There is no security within a capitalist society - only the establishment of Socialism will give that to all of us.

THE SILENCE OF THE SOCIALIST STANDARD

Readers of the Socialist Standard have yet to learn of the event which the Clapham Socialist Party is anxious to conceal; i.e. their unconstitutional and forcible exclusion from the Party of N.W. London and Camden/Bloomsbury branches comprising some 50 members, in May 1991. Now that the details of this affair are coming to light, despite the censorship of the Clapham leadership, a new need has arisen; the need to cover up the crime. The need for an exercise in damage limitation. Thus we have a number of unofficial Clapham scribes who have now set out to misrepresent the circumstances which gave rise to the situation. Apart from claiming that this was a clash of personalities, we are now deemed to be guilty of persistent and wilful undemocratic behaviour.

This invective when applied to the case in point meant that when a democratic majority decide that two and two make five, then five it is. Those of the minority who persist that the correct answer is four are wilfully obstructing the decision of the majority. To illustrate this distortion of the democratic process we publish a speech of the Camden delegate to the 1989 September Delegate Meeting. This also explains the circumstances which led to us being thrown out by force majeure in May 1991.

When the Meeting started an attempt was made to prevent our delegates J. D'Arcy, G. Howlett from sitting. Messrs. Coleman and Slapper (Islington) moved "That they not be allowed to sit" unless our delegates gave an undertaking to abide by 1988 Conference Resolution - changing the Party name. This was an attempt to silence the delegates. Our delegate made it clear to the Delegate Meeting that they had no power to unseat delegates properly appointed under Party rule, and that they would sit regardless of this undemocratic attempt to unseat us. The resolution was dropped, and the following speech given.

CAMDEN/BLOOMSBURY BRANCH

September 1989.

Statement read to the Autumn Delegate Meeting, 1989.

Camden branch regards the resolution passed at the 1988 Annual Conference, and its subsequent interpretation by the E.C. as creating a situation within the Party which requires a mandate from the

entire membership through a Party Poll. That the holding of this Party Poll has so far been denied by the E.C. exposes the hollowness of the claim that the E.C. and those branches who support them are the sole guardians of Party democracy.

Camden branch holds that the 1988 Annual Conference resolution was out of order, and is in conflict with the Declaration of Principles. This resolution prevents the Party from carrying out its historic function by removing it from the field of political action and effectively changing its name.

Camden branch holds that the basis of membership of the Socialist Party of Great Britain is agreement with its Declaration of Principles. Clauses 6 and 8 call upon the working class to organise within the Socialist Party of Great Britain for the conquest of political power. Clause 8 specifically commits the Party to entering the field of political action - that is, the field of propaganda. This has been the position of the Socialist Party of Great Britain since it was formed 85 years ago.

All members have signed these Principles because they agreed with them. Those who no longer agreed with the Principles either resigned or were dealt with under the democratic procedures set out in the Rule book. The action of a number of branches at the 1988 Conference showed that they disagreed with the Principles. The action subsequently by the 1988 E.C. in banning the use of the Party's name in propaganda were actions detrimental to the interests of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and a breach of its Principles. This act of betrayal by those branches and the 1988 E.C. of the Party's Principles is now 'justified' on the grounds of Party democracy. The grotesque logic behind this smokescreen of democracy is that it is perfectly in order to disagree with the Declaration of Principles as long as it is done democratically by dissident members and branches, many of whom have now left the Party.

The partisan E.C., the spearhead of the anti-S.P.G.B. campaign, now threatens disciplinary action against those members and branches who carry out propaganda in the name of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

The Socialist Standard is no longer the journal of the Socialist Party

of Great Britain, and refuses to carry adverts of meetings which use the title Socialist Party of Great Britain. Speakers who appear on the outdoor platform in Hyde Park which bears the name Socialist Party of Great Britain are harassed by the E.C. and the Central Organiser, as well as being accused of being undemocratic. Branches placing adverts in the press for public meetings at their own expense are threatened with disciplinary action.

This branch, having considered the present situation, and having regard to the obstruction and hostility shown to our branch by the E.C. over several years, have reached the conclusion that there is a section of the membership (we claim a minority) who are out to destroy the Socialist Party of Great Britain; to remove it from the political field, and to erase its identity as being the only Socialist Party. These people want to break our link with the past and re-establish themselves in a new party - a parasitic growth which has been nurtured within the S.P.G.B. using the resources of the Party.

The name and goodwill of the Socialist Party of Great Britain is to be ignominiously prostituted in order to raise funds for this new organisation through legacies. No case has ever been made out as to why this new party should replace the S.P.G.B. other than the pathetic claim by Islington branch that the name Socialist Party of Great Britain is nationalistic. This ignorant remark is given as the sole reason for abolishing the S.P.G.B.

This branch rejects the hypocritical and mildewed arguments put forward by the social democrats within the Party who keep talking about democracy but fail to practice it, by consistently opposing the call for a Party Poll.

Camden branch affirms that the Socialist Party of Great Britain will continue in existence for the purpose for which it was formed and will continue with its propaganda as it has done from the beginning, in accordance with the Declaration of Principles.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY'S FALSE CLAIMS

In our No.8 issue we referred to the Socialist Party and our bank account. (See "Revolutionary Litigants" p.6). It now transpires that they wrote to our bankers asking them to close our account and transfer the funds to them. The Building Society immediately blocked our account and asked us to negotiate with Clapham as to the ownership of the funds. (The Socialist Party shows no compunction in breaking its own Conference Resolutions and Party Polls by writing on "Socialist Party of Great Britain" headed notepaper.) The Socialist Party did not see fit to send us a copy of their claim and we have refused to negotiate over the ownership of our own funds with them.

This latest spoiling tactic is deliberately designed to obstruct us in our Socialist propaganda. (Something it will not succeed in doing). The Building Society has now been recruited by Clapham to do its dirty work for it by falsely pretending they have a claim to the money in our account. The Building Society now joins the Guardian advertising department, and other advertising departments, various hall proprietors, and political opponents all of whom have been written to with the idea of refusing our adverts, refusing hall hire, and trying to stop our debates; and now they want to take our money too!

They are too cowardly to debate with us, and instead look to capitalism's institutions to help them suppress us. This contemptible anti working class act will, we suppose, be described in the words of their General Secretary, A. Buick, as "principled and honest work for socialism", ie: claiming money which does not belong to them. Unlike the S.P.G.B. the Clapham Party is not self supporting. It depends on legacies to maintain its organisation and has done for a number of years. Legacies incidentally left because of the goodwill built up by the S.P.G.B. over many years. The dead men's money has kept the Socialist Party alive - but only on a life support machine.

The blocking of our account has caused us some small inconvenience and we have authorised our General Secretary to accept cheques in his name as a temporary measure. We ask our readers to bear with us until the matter is resolved.

We are pleased to offer the following tapes of Lectures, Debates etc that we have held over the past years. Some of the lectures were given by our members when we were still attached to Clapham. All tapes include the full lecture, and in most of them, a part of the question and discussion period. They can be purchased in the sum of £1.50 each, including postage and packing.

Please order by number and send your remittance (cheques made payable to C. May) to our Head Office - 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB.

1. Industrial or Political Action -
De Leon and the Socialist Labour Party. 1992
2. Rust in the Iron Curtain. 1991
3. Workers of the World - goodnight. 1992
4. The S.P.G.B. is hostile to all other parties. 1992
5. Religion - the heroin of the people. 1991
6. The Rise and Fall of the Socialist Party. 1991
7. William Morris. 1992
8. The General Election. 1992
9. Marx and modern Capitalism. 1990
10. Marx and the virile ghost. 1990
11. The Recession and Marx's remedy. 1991
12. Which way Russian Capitalism? 1993
13. The collapse or recovery of capitalism 1993
14. The Stock Exchange, share ownership
and the working class. 1990
15. Debate. The S.P.G.B. versus the European Movement 1993
16. The relevance of Marxism to the modern world. 1976
17. Marxian economics. Capital - chapters 1-4 1970
18. The crisis of capitalism. 1976

SUMMER SCHOOL

After our successful venture into this field last year, we are pleased to announce our plans for 1993.

Instead of holding the School on one day, we have split the programme to cover two Sundays - the 20th June and 11th July. On each occasion, we shall start with a light buffet luncheon at 1 p.m. and the lectures will commence at 2 p.m. This will give ample time for questions and discussion.

As at all our meetings, admission is free and we offer a warm welcome to all our readers.

LANDMARKS OF SOCIALIST THEORY

Sunday, 20th June, 2 p.m.

Lecture No. 1: 1832 Reform Acts.
The Chartist and the Franchise

Speaker: T. D'Arcy

Lecture No. 2: The Communist Manifesto and
German Political Parties

Speaker: E. Hardy

Sunday, 11th July, 2 p.m.

Lecture No. 1: The Paris Commune. 18th Brumaire
Minority Action - Mass Understanding

Speaker: J. D'Arcy

Lecture No. 2: The failure of Reform Parties and
Revolutionary use of Parliament

Speaker: R. Lloyd

Venue: Marchmont Community Centre
62 Marchmont Street, London WC1
(5 mins. Russell Square Tube Station)

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

ALL ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP TO
The Socialist Party of Great Britain,
71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays in the month.

7.30 pm Abbey Community Centre, Belsize Road, NW6.

Secretary C. May, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB

CAMDEN / BLOOMSBURY BRANCH meets on the 4th Tuesday of month.

6 pm Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, WC1

Correspondence to the Secretary, S.P.G.B., 31 Caernarvon Road, Eynsbury, St. Neots, Cambs. PE19 2RN

All meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. Those wishing to find out more about the Party and its activities should contact the Secretary.

FURTHER LITERATURE AVAILABLE

Socialist Studies nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8

Turmoil in Russia (leaflet).

Available on receipt of large s.a.e.

Questions of the Day pamphlet:-

No.1 Inflation: Cause and Effects

No.2 Unemployment and Recessions.

No.3 Marx - Modern History and Economics.

No.4. The Socialist Party of Great Britain and the Trade Unions.
(25p each, post paid)

MARXIAN CLASSICS

Wage labour and Capital

Wages Price and Profit

Socialism Utopian and Scientific

(Prices on application)